

9 species against 8 on Penguin, which is ten times as large. The extinction rate for other plant categories lies between these extremes, the result of which is a steady change in composition of the flora, as well as its general impoverishment, as the islands diminish in area. For example, on Penguin Island sclerophytes comprise nearly half the indigenous flora; on Seal, Bird and Middle Shag their proportion is respectively 26, 17 and 7%.

Opportunity for exotic species to establish themselves likewise declines as the islands (and their number of niches) become smaller.

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FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Children's Python Preying on Free-tailed Bat.—On June 26, 1960, in a cave on Mt. Anderson, 70 miles south-east of Derby, I noticed a Children's Python (*Liasis childreni*) crawling along a rock ledge 20 ft. above the floor. Almost as soon as I saw the snake it struck at a Free-tailed Bat (*Taphazous georgianus*), secured a grip and coiled about it. The bat soon weakened and fell. The two creatures landed at my feet and when I picked them up the bat was dead. I carried them back to our camp a mile away and the snake did not release its hold until it was placed in a collecting bag. The snake measured 18 in. in length.

—PETER SLATER, Derby.

White Ibis in the South-West.—The White Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopia*) has made its appearance once more in the Murray District. In the irruption of 1952, when there was a large influx of the Straw-necked Ibis into this area, White Ibis were seen. This year beside the usual 30-50 resident Straw-necked Ibis there has been an influx of ibis presumably from the north but not so many as in 1952. In July 1961 Colin Paterson saw a White Ibis among 20-30 birds two miles north of Pinjarra. On August 9 Fred Grantham saw a White Ibis with black head and black tip to wing in a flock of 20-30 birds two miles west of Coolup. I have not heard of any other species which was noted in the southern irruption of 1952 (*W.A. Nat.*, 3: 177-196) having been seen this year.

—ANGUS ROBINSON, Coolup.

Pheasants Feeding on Snails at Rottnest I.—On October 9, 1960 a hen Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), a species introduced on Rottnest Island, struck a power line after a high speed take off and dropped dead. The crop seemed unduly swollen and hard. On examination I found it to be crammed with snails (*Theba pisana*).